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J LANCELOT SMITH CHAIRMAN ONTARIO COMMITTEE ON TAXATION=
: PARLIAMENT BLDGS TOR= 88 University Ave. 9th Floor.
DEAR SIR - THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION WAS PASSED BY SARNIA
CITY COUNCIL AT ITS MEETING HELD ON JULY 26 1965 -
"THAT THIS COUNCIL, HAVING CONSIDERED THE RESOLUTION
PASSED BY ITS SLECIAL ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE, RESOLVES TO
RECOMMEND TO THE PROVINCIAL SELECT COMMITTEE ON
ASSESSMENT AND TAXATION THAT IT UNDERTAKE A STUDY
RELATIVE TO THE IMPLINATION OF SECTION 4, SUB SECTION
17, OF THE ASSESSMENT ACT AS IT APPLIES TO DIFFERENT

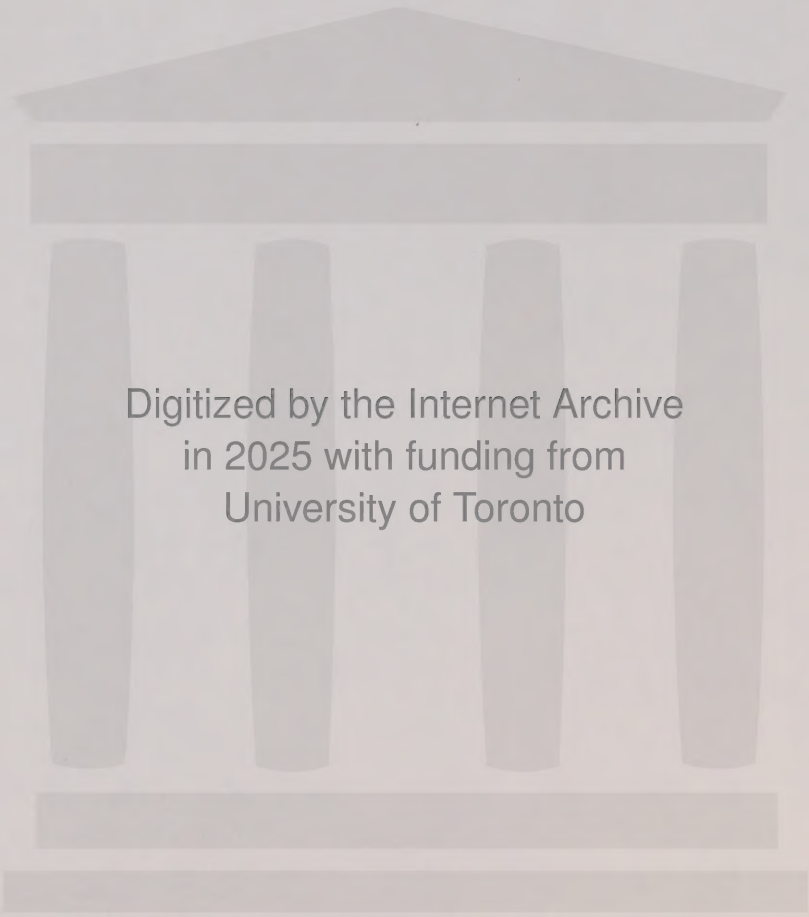
J. R. White, general manager · directeur général, Toronto 6122b

local time · heure locale 1965 JUL 27 PM 5 09

MOE348/2-

TYPES OF MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT THAT HAVE COME INTO
USE IN RECENT YEARS, AND THAT THIS RESOLUTION BE PASSED
ON TO THE SMITH COMMITTEE BY THE CITY CLERK BY
TELEGRAM ON JLY 27, 1965, AND ALSO THAT A COPY BE
FORWARDED TO MR. J. RALPH KNOX, M.P.P. SINCERELY=
G A M THOMAS CITY CLERK.

J. R. White, general manager · directeur général, Toronto 6122b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A Victim of Pressure ?

FROM ALL REPORTS the Special Committee on Assessment has folded up . . . a victim of an exceptionally heavy lobby by Sarnia's industry.

Readers will recall that following the 1962 election, and again following the 1964 election, a hue and cry was set up on the Sarnia assessment situation.

The patform won Mayor Ross his office and elected Ald. Stu Knox two years later. In any event, a Special Committee was set up, consisting of several citizens and 1 Alderman. The idea was to check into, and make recommendations upon, the entire assessment situation in the city.

Their initial reports backed up the City Assessor to a great degree insofar as the approach to the contentious house assessments was concerned. Their major recommendation . . . which has NEVER hit Sarnia Council's agenda (although the Aldermen all have the report) was that Industry's general assessment is providing less and less of the tax dollar in Sarnia despite a massive, constant, multi-million dollar spiral of added plants and in-plant construction.

The end result is that people with $9000 homes are paying $400 per year taxes and the home owners are carrying by far the greatest load. Industry, it seems, can put up $9 million worth of new plants and under the Assessment Act cannot be taxed much more than $4000.

The Special Committee has worked fairly and diligently but has not been able to get over the barrier of a City Council which apparently has only tabled the report (and kept it secret, to boot) but seemingly has no intention of doing anything.

Industry cannot be blamed for its powerful lobby against any revision of an Assessemtn Act dating to 1904. The Act works for them and the companies work for their shareholders and it is good business to take advantage of the law.

The Special Committe merely suggests that the city appeal to the Province to repeal and revise the sections of the Act which have to do with taxing "machinery". The plants don't put roofs on certain production units and hence evade extra assessment.

Since Council refuses to act, let alone acknowledge that it has the report, the Committee has all but disintegrated out of frustration.

There can be no other conclusion we can draw other than that Industry as a whole, has told the City to "lay off" the topic. Or, if this hasn't happened then the City Council has decided for other reasons to leave the situation stand.

We have no brief against Industry. They supply a massive pay-roll to this area and they have made Sarnia into what it is to-day. However, as corporate citizens, they too, have an obligation just as much as Mr. & Mrs. Sarnia, to pay just and fair taxes to permit the sensible operation of their city.

The industrial assessment situation is admittedly more peculiar to Sarnia than to many cities where factories and plants are operating within normal buildings. The petro-chemical plants, by their nature, are "open-air" factories of a sort turning crude oil into a myriad list of products.

Sarnia Council has a heavy propensity towards appointing "committees" and blissfully ignoring their recommendations . . . the Centennial "committee" is one glaring example of just that .